Henry Adams
Young, James P.

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Abbreviations of Frequently Cited Sources

WORKS BY HENRY ADAMS

Chartres


Degradation


Democracy


Education


Esther


Great Secession Winter


History I


History II

History of the United States During the Administrations of James Madison,

**Letters**

**Life of Gallatin**

**Randolph**

**SECONDARY SOURCES**

**Literary Vocation**

**Major Phase**

**Middle Years**

**Mind and Art**

**Scientific Historian**

**Young Henry Adams**

**Introduction**

1. Richard Hofstadter, The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968). 4. Alfred Kazin makes a similar point but from a different perspective. "History exerts its power as literature, not because a book has literary distinction, but because the magisterial pattern it weaves is felt to shape us, to change us, to embody our ideas and image of collective experience. History then
becomes a memory of the race." And later he adds, "The historical thinkers we read over and again, because their books are the history we have, are those whom we believe even if we do not accept their argument. Our image of history is not even obtained directly from their books; it is passed from mind to mind in the excited discovery that this is how history 'works.'" Kazin, An American Procession (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 281, 282.


7. Decker, Literary Vocation. 3. An interesting anecdote illustrates Adams's intense patriotism. One evening at dinner during World War I, Adams's former student Henry Cabot Lodge attacked Woodrow Wilson. Though no fan of the president, Adams said, "Cabot! I've never allowed treasonable conversation at this table and I don't propose to allow it now" (quoted in Levenson, Mind and Art, 165). Wilson Carey McWilliams points out that Adams must have enjoyed the irony here, since Lodge was attacking Wilson for being insufficiently patriotic (personal communication). It may be worth noting that Adams and his wife were both very critical of their friend Henry James for his protracted periods of exile in Britain, as well as for his preference for English ways. See introduction to The Correspondence of Henry James and Henry Adams: 1877–1914, ed. George Monteiro (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), esp. 5–6. Still, it must be mentioned that Adams himself was a notable traveler, though Washington remained his base. He worked against success by publishing his novels anonymously or pseudonymously and by circulating Chartres and the Education privately to his friends. Neither was published until years later.

8. Education, 382.

9. Henry Adams to Charles William Eliot, March 2, 1877, in Letters 2:301. See also his letter to another student, Henry Osborn Taylor, a medieval historian. "To me, accuracy is relative. I care very little whether the details are exact, if only my ensemble is to scale" (Adams to Taylor, January 17, 1905, in Letters 5:628). This is in reference to his much later book Mont Saint Michel and Chartres.


15. Ibid., 20–29, esp. 27–28.


18. Ibid., 166.


23. For a fine study that focuses on the relation of Adams as a writer to his family, see Earl N. Harbert, *The Force So Much Closer Home: Henry Adams and the Adams


26. Brooks D. Simpson, The Political Education of Henry Adams (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 145. The use of the word “distorted” suggests the relentlessly hostile character of Simpson’s discussion, which is of interest but must be used with at least as much caution as Adams’s own account of his life.

I. Foundations of the Early Republic

1. In spite of my decision to begin with a brief look at some of Adams’s youthful thoughts on the Civil War, I generally approach his interpretation of the course of American history according to the chronology of the history rather than the chronology of Adams’s writing. This seems to be the best way to capture the full sweep of Adams’s assessment of the American experiment.


3. Ibid., 30.


11. Ibid., 20.

12. Ibid., 15. On other primitive conditions, see Taylor, “Historical Bifocals,” 179.


15. Ibid., 7, 9.

16. Ibid., 47–53, quote at 49.

17. Ibid., 47.

18. Ibid., 52–53.

19. Ibid., 11.

20. Ibid., 31.


22. Ibid., 57.


26. Ibid.

27. Ibid. Whatever the deficiencies of Jefferson, these “High Federalists” were as bad or worse. At their worst, these Federalists were, in the pungent terms of Richard Hofstadter, “crazed vendettists and reckless conspirators” (The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968], 32). Adams would no doubt have agreed.


29. Ibid., 72–75, quotes at 72, 74.

30. Ibid., 76–77.

31. Ibid., 78.

32. Ibid., 79–80. It should be remembered that the alliance Adams discusses was in fact the founding of what is now the Democratic Party.

33. Ibid., 80.

34. Ibid., 81.
35. Ibid., 90.
37. Ibid., 93–95.
40. Ibid., 99. There is no doubt that in some sense Adams sees Jefferson as a great man, but he also appears so deeply flawed as to raise the question whether Adams accepted the “admitted standards.”
42. History I, 100–101.
44. History I, 101–2.
45. Ibid., 102–6. Adams’s brief discussion of the young John C. Calhoun in 1800 is interesting. He is portrayed as cold and rigid but a fervent Jeffersonian with little affection for slavery. “A radical democrat, less liberal, less cultivated, and much less genial than Jefferson, Calhoun was the true heir to his intellectual succession; stronger in logic, bolder in action” (ibid., 106). Adams refrains from discussing where the thought of the mature Calhoun was to take him as his zeal for democracy lessened and his support for slavery increased and he helped take his region down the road to the secession that Adams despised.
46. Ibid., 120.
47. Ibid., 107–8; emphasis added.
48. Ibid., 108–9, quotes on 109. In writing of the new man, did Adams have in mind Hector St. John de Crevecoeur?
50. History I, 121.
51. Ibid., 122–23. Without mentioning his name, Adams uses his own great-grandfather John as support for his theory of upward mobility, pointing out that the incumbent president in 1800, who, with Benjamin Franklin, had signed the peace treaty with Britain, was the son of a small farmer and had been a schoolteacher in his youth.
52. Ibid., 125.
55. Ibid., 10.
56. Ibid., 17–19.
57. I disagree sharply with Cunningham's suggestion that Adams may have devoted excessive attention to sectionalism. See ibid., 57.

58. Ibid., 25-43; on the South, see Eugene Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery (New York: Vintage Books, 1967). Genovese's work is controversial. For a brief assessment and a guide to the literature, see James P. Young, Reconsidering American Liberalism: The Troubled Odyssey of the Liberal Idea (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 111-12, and the literature cited there. Cunningham points out that Adams has little to say about slavery except that it depressed the South. This is a major point of Genovese's.

59. At the same time, it is worth stressing that the sort of history Adams was writing in these introductory chapters was something quite new and that he did go to some lengths to give his sources a critical evaluation, though the evaluation might be inadequate by twentieth-century standards and, of course, relevant data and secondary studies are now more accessible.

60. Cunningham, Adams Revisited, 45-46.

61. Ibid., 51.


63. Cunningham, Adams Revisited, 52.

64. On Jefferson's ambiguity, see Young, Reconsidering American Liberalism, 81-91, 108-9.


66. Life of Gallatin, 170.

67. Ibid., 199.

68. Ibid., 211. Adams even resorts to the use of Jefferson's own language to describe aspects of the tense situation, though he does concede some exaggeration. See ibid., 206.

69. It is striking how much of Adams's argument is echoed by Hofstadter in America at 1750, 131-79. It might be thought that this title is an homage to Adams, but Hofstadter's widow, who edited the posthumous publication of this fragment of his intended magnum opus, says that it was modeled on Halevy's England in 1815.

70. For a similar point, see Hofstadter, America at 1750, 132-33.


72. History II, 1344.

73. Hofstadter, America at 1750, 132-33.

74. See Gordon Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), and Joyce Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). In another recent book, Jon Butler pushes these modernizing tendencies back to 1680 and argues that even in the colonial period,
the territory that was to become the United States was the most modern in the world, including Britain. This too points to an exceptionalist thesis. However, Gordon Wood contends that Butler misconceives the nature of early American modernity, since he focuses on ethnic and religious diversity rather than on the idea of equal and independent citizens for whom authority had to be earned and consented to. See Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), and Gordon Wood, “Give Me Diversity or Give Me Death,” *New Republic* (June 12, 2000), 34–39. For Wood’s discussion of Appleby, see “Early American Get-up-and-go,” *New York Review of Books* (June 29, 2000), 50–53.

75. Wood, “Early American Get-up-and-go,” 50. Some, including Appleby, might argue that this theory is an intellectually constructed myth, but Wood contends that it was “rooted in the lives of many ordinary Americans” (53). Much of Appleby’s analysis seems to bear him out, though it is clear that much of the emerging consensus applies better to the North than to the South. In particular, she stresses the rapidly emerging differences between North and South, a view to which Adams could fully subscribe. Also, Wood admits that the new social history of the past generation raises questions about the tendency of the consensus theory to overlook race, slavery, the poor, the immigrants, and the victims of persecution.


2. The Jeffersonian Foundation


4. Adams’s great *History* has been discussed primarily in relation to his philosophy. While I do not neglect this topic, I want to consider the work as part of a theory about the course of American history, which gradually flows into his more general philosophical concerns.

5. A disclaimer is in order. I cannot hope to establish the historical validity of Adams’s view of Jefferson, though it is sometimes necessary to consult the literature on the Master of Monticello. My interest lies in what that view tells us about Adams. Jefferson will continue to remain a mystery, though so too may Adams. For my own brief attempt to sketch Jefferson, see James P. Young, *Reconsidering American Liberalism:*

7. Samuels, Middle Years, 387.
8. Jordy, Scientific Historian, 73.
9. Henry Adams to Henry Cabot Lodge, May 15, 1876, Letters 2:263. In a letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, he comments that "much as I want to read your Hamilton, the subject repels me more than my regard for you attracts" (quoted in Jordy, Scientific Historian, 67). Wilson Carey McWilliams points out that Adams's dislike for Hamilton goes back to the political enmity between John Adams and Hamilton, the latter having supported Jefferson in the close election of 1800; moreover, Adams detested Hamilton's sexual morals.
10. Peterson, Jefferson Image, 285. Peter Shaw gives a useful brief survey of the interpretive situation. He forcefully supports the position that the History presents a scathing indictment of the Jeffersonians and a defense of the Adams family against them. The analysis is useful and stimulating, but I cannot entirely agree. See Peter Shaw, "Blood Is Thicker than Irony," New England Quarterly (June 1967), 163–87. There is reason to think that the History might be even more pro-Jefferson had it not been for the intervention of Adams's older brother Charles Francis Adams, Jr. In commenting on the privately printed draft manuscript, Charles was ever watchful for signs that Henry was soft on Jefferson. Henry frequently gave in to Charles's criticisms. See Samuels, Middle Years, 390–97. See also Peter Shaw, "The War of 1812 Could Not Take Place: Henry Adams's History," Yale Review (June 1973), 544–56. For a com-
mentary on some recent literature dealing with the period that is critical of Adams's scholarship or interpretations, see William Dusinberre, *The Myth of Failure* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980), 147–57. On the whole, Dusinberre tends to support Adams's interpretations.

11. *History* I, 188.
12. Ibid., 100–101.
13. Ibid., esp. 58–59. One finds the same hysteria to this day; Jefferson still stirs enormous passion in all parts of the political spectrum. See, in this instance, Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). This is one of the most intemperate assaults on Jefferson ever; it links him with even Pol Pot and Timothy McVeigh (who was found guilty of bombing the Federal Building in Oklahoma City), not to mention the Ku Klux Klan. Of course, Jefferson did admire France, but for a more sober view, see William Howard Adams, *The Paris Years of Thomas Jefferson* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).

15. One observation on Jefferson’s principles is of interest. Henry’s father, Charles Francis Adams, wrote in a Fourth of July letter to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., “Had they [our ancestors] then consented to follow Thomas Jefferson to the full extent of the first draught of the Declaration, they would have added little to the seven years severity of their struggle and would have entirely saved the present trials from their children” (quoted in Levenson, *Mind and Art*, 11). Of course, the reference is to Jefferson’s early proposal to end slavery. Jefferson’s position on this question is characteristically more ambiguous than the senior Adams makes it. See Joseph Ellis, *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 51–53.

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., 137.
23. *History* I, 139.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 97–99, 140. For the text of the Virginia Resolution, see The Mind of the Founder: Sources of the Political Thought of James Madison, ed. Marvin Meyers (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1973), 297–349. Madison, working closely with Jefferson, was the author of the Virginia Resolution. For the Kentucky Resolution, which Jefferson authored, see Jefferson, Writings, 449–56.


27. History 1, 140–41, 175–76.

28. Ibid., 141. This raises an interesting question. How are we to judge so contradictory a figure as Jefferson? His private opinions were frequently more radical than his public statements and actions. Which standard do we adopt? Perhaps the real Jefferson, in spite of his inflammatory private rhetoric, was a cautious compromiser who liked to give vent to his dreams in his voluminous correspondence. The “real” Jefferson is elusive, but this remains one of the possibilities. To the extent that Adams is like his protagonist, perhaps he shares in this ambiguity.

29. Ibid., 142.


31. History 1, 142–43.

32. Ibid., 143.

33. Ibid., 144.

34. Thomas Jefferson quoted in ibid., 146–47.

35. Ibid., 147. As can be seen today, the use of economic power to achieve foreign policy ends is a persistent theme in American history. It might also be observed that it frequently meets with as little success today as it did in the days of Jefferson and Madison.


37. History 1, 177, 186–87.

38. Thomas Jefferson, quoted in ibid., 175.
39. Ibid., 189, 202. Not until four years before his death, in a letter to W. T. Berry, did Jefferson call for this radical democratic reform (quoted in ibid., 176). For Adams’s detailed account of the judiciary debate, see ibid., 174–77, 186–90, 193–202. One wonders whether Adams would really have favored an elected judiciary. It seems doubtful.

40. Alexander Hamilton quoted in ibid., 188–89. It should be remembered that Hamilton’s remark occurs in his famous letter to Senator Bayard, in which he swung his support to Jefferson against Aaron Burr during the struggle to settle the tied election of 1800.

41. Ibid., 180.

42. Ibid., 180. For a fuller discussion, see 180–83.


44. History I, 362.

45. Thomas Jefferson quoted in ibid., 363.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., 366. The first Adams family member to note the reliance on implied powers and the abandonment of republican principles in the Louisiana Purchase was John Quincy Adams, writing in his diary (quoted in Harbert, The Force so Much Closer Home, 90–91). The diary notation is brief, and Henry deserves full credit for developing it. Like his grandson, John Quincy Adams had ambivalent feelings about Jefferson. Consider his comment on the relation of John Adams and Jefferson: “The mutual influence of these two mighty minds upon each others a phenomenon, like the invisible and mysterious movements of the magnet in the physical world, and in which the sagacity of the future historian may discover the solution of much of our national history not otherwise easily accountable” (quoted in Ellis, American Sphinx, 123; emphasis added).

Charles Francis Adams was more critical: “He did not always speak exactly as he felt, either towards his friends or his enemies. As a consequence, he has left hanging over a part of his public life a vapor of duplicity” (quoted in ibid., 124).

48. History I, 378–79; emphasis added. For a full discussion of the congressional debate, see ibid., 366–79.

49. Ibid., 380–81. This is one of the few direct references to a family member Adams allows himself.

50. Ibid., 381–82.

51. Ibid., 383.

52. Ibid., 384.

53. Ibid., 385–86. Jefferson’s bitter enemy John Marshall concurred, with what Adams sarcastically refers to as his “characteristic wisdom,” when the issue reached the Supreme Court in American Insurance Company and Others v. Canter, saying, “The right to govern may be the inevitable consequence of the right to acquire territory.
Whatever may be the source whence the power is derived, the possession of it is unquestioned” (see ibid., 386).

54. Ibid., 386.

55. Ibid., 387.

56. Ibid., 388.

57. Thomas Jefferson to John Breckinridge quoted in ibid., 359.


59. This interpretation anticipates Sheldon Wolin’s stimulating work The Presence of the Past (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

60. History I, 388.

61. Ibid., 388–89, quote at 389. For a brief but spirited defense of Jefferson’s actions, see Ellis, American Sphinx, 211–13. The defense is couched in terms of practicality. Debate over an amendment, Ellis contends, would have raised troublesome questions about slavery, the slave trade, Spanish land claims, and other issues. He even defends the “arbitrary and despotic” provisional government established over Louisiana on the grounds of the size and ethnic diversity of the territory. He also correctly points out that on issues such as the debt and the embargo, Jefferson held fast to his principles, “despite massive evidence that they were at odds with reality.” For Ellis, the key to Jefferson’s actions was his sense that the West was America’s future. What Frederick Jackson Turner later called a “safety valve” was for Jefferson “a self-renewing engine that drove the American republic forward. The West was the place where his agrarian idyll could be regularly rediscovered.” He saw the West the way some modern optimists see technology. He was startlingly nonchalant about whether all the territory remained within the American Union. Though it became the dominant issue of the next half century, he had little interest in the long-term fate of the territory. One might add that Adams slights Jefferson’s almost mystic vision of westward expansion as a means to preserve his ideal republic. This may be due to a certain provincial distaste for the West.


63. Earl Harbert suggests that in the History Adams attempts to show that the “political disasters” of 1800 to 1816 derived from the Southern failure to carry out Jefferson’s program. But this implies that Adams thought the Jeffersonian program was right. I argue that Adams accepted the substantive results of the program, while regretting the unprincipled way the ends were achieved. This judgment applies only to the Louisiana Purchase and not to the events of Jefferson’s second term. See Harbert, The Force so Much Closer Home, 119.

64. Harbert, The Force so Much Closer Home, 126–29. Harbert notes that Jeffer-
son's policies made protection from foreign enemies difficult, but Adams, like Jefferson, makes the near doubling of the nation's size the key to the entire History. This suggests that Adams had a Jeffersonian sense of importance, though Adams by no means ignored foreign affairs. Harbert notes that with his protestations that he was an eighteenth-century man living in the twentieth century, Adams proclaimed his own obsolescence, but one must take Adams's penchant for dissimulation into account here. J. C. Levenson notes that Adams had "a more than casual relationship with the founders of pragmatism," including Chauncey Wright, Charles Sanders Peirce, and, perhaps most important, William James (see Mind and Art, 130). John Diggins comments, "Adams did not have to wait until the pragmatists came along to advise Americans to reject all ideas that cannot be translated into action" (The Promise of Pragmatism, 130).

65. Levenson, Mind and Art, 132. At the same time Adams wished for theory, he also thought it important to avoid framing issues so technically and legally that a large society could not comprehend them (History II, 300). Levenson's outstanding work guided me to this passage.


67. Education, 11; Diggins, Promise of Pragmatism, 55.

68. For a theory of authority of this type, see Carl J. Friedrich, "Authority, Reason, and Discretion," in Authority (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 28–48. It follows from this that no special person or class can lay claim to authority. It must be earned. See Norman Jacobson, "Knowledge, Tradition, and Authority: A Note on the American Experience," in ibid., 112–25. Consider also Michael Walzer's argument that in a just democratic society, political power rightfully goes to the contestants who make the best arguments for their positions (Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality, 1983, esp. 303–6). Used in this sense, political power is closely linked to authority.

69. History I, 471.
70. Ibid., 437.
71. Ibid., 210.
72. Ibid., 438.
73. Ibid., 439.
74. Ibid., 299. On the absolute centrality of peace in Adams's interpretation, see Peterson, Jefferson Image, 287–90.

75. History I, 525.
76. Ibid., 1020.
77. Ibid., 929–46, passim.
78. Ibid., 1021.
79. Ibid., 1040.
80. Ibid., 1040–44.
81. Ibid., 1045–47.
82. Ibid., 1048; emphasis added.
83. Ibid., 1115.
84. Ibid., 1116.
85. Ibid., 1117. Adams notes that in the end, Jefferson believed that the embargo had no "claim to respect" as an economic policy (see ibid., 1116).
86. Ibid., 1117–18.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid., 1118.
89. Levenson points out that Adams was less militaristic than such passages make it appear. His interest in military affairs "grew from studious reflection on the nature and possibility of peace," and developed out of his concern with Jefferson's pacifism (see Mind and Art, 174). Jordy also plays down the thought that Adams was a militarist, while making interesting comments on this passage (see Scientific Historian, 110).
90. History I, 1118–21.
91. Ibid., 1121.
92. Ibid., 1122–25.
93. Ibid., 1126.
94. Ibid.
95. For an exhaustive recent survey of the abundant literature on American exceptionalism, see Seymour Martin Lipset, American Exceptionalism: A Double-edged Sword (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996).
96. Diggins, Promise of Pragmatism, 76.
97 History II, 354, 467.
100. Ibid., 104.
101. The last paragraph owes a great deal to comments by Wilson Carey McWilliams, who helped me clarify the issues at stake.

3. The Madisonian Continuation

1. Perhaps it should also be suggested that Madison suffers because his greatest contributions were his role in drafting the Constitution and then defending it in the Federalist Papers and his equally large part in drafting the Bill of Rights. All this work falls outside the scope of Adams's study. Since Madison was undoubtedly superior to Jefferson as a theorist, it is unfortunate that Adams did not need to come to grips with these writings. Adams certainly gives every sign of admiring the Constitution Madison did so much to create.
2. History I, 129.
4. Ellis, American Sphinx, 123.
5. Samuels, Middle Years, 264.
9. Ibid., 16.
10. Ibid., 19.
11. Ibid., 110.
12. Francis Jackson quoted in ibid., 150.
13. On Madison’s distrust of unrestricted commerce and his continuing attachment to “peaceable coercion,” see History II, 148–49, 205. These ideas were a persistent thread throughout the history of his administration until the outbreak of war in 1812.
14. Ibid., 118.
15. Ibid., 447. In general, Adams thinks that the issue of impressment was not well understood. The great majority of those impressed were, in fact, British subjects, and American ships were frequently manned by foreign nationals whose services the United States volunteered to do without, an act not without cost. See, for example, History II, 595, 612.
16. For an interesting perspective on this point that has helped me here, see Shaw, “The War of 1812 Could Not Take Place,” 544–56. Shaw’s title is obviously a little overheated. It would have been better to say that Adams believed that it should not have taken place, at least not when it did.
17. On French policy on the high seas, see History II, 22–32; 101–9, esp. 109; 173–82. Nowhere is Adams’s hatred of Napoleon more clear than in his discussions of French maritime policy. He notes that the emperor did not act “according to the rules of ordinary civilization” (26) and later gives a more extended assessment of his character:

Napoleon could seize without notice ten million dollars worth of American property, imprisoning the American crews of two or three hundred vessels in his dungeons, while at the same instant he told the Americans that he loved them, that their commerce was within the scope of his policy, and as a climax avowed a scheme to mislead the United States government, hardly troubling himself to use forms likely to conceal his object; yet the vast majority of Americans never greatly resented acts which seemed to them like the
exploits of an Italian brigand on the stage. Beyond doubt, Napoleon regarded his professions of love and interest not as irony of extravagance, but as adapted to deceive. (Ibid., 181–82)

18. Ibid., 447–49.
19. Ibid., 573. It might be noted that the extremists probably needed little persuasion to convince themselves of this absurd point.
20. Ibid., 905–6.
23. Ibid., 1109.
24. Ibid., 1112.
25. Ibid., 1114.
27. For the full text of the proposed amendments, see “Report and Resolutions of the Hartford Convention,” January 4, 1815, in Great Issues in American History: From the Revolution to the Civil War, 1765–1865, ed. Richard Hofstadter (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), 241. The bias of the amendments is so evident that Madison is said to have laughed aloud when he read them (Rutland, Presidency of Madison, 186).
28. Boston Centinal and Gouverneur Morris quoted in History II, 1116. The approval of the militant Morris and Pickering was important. Pickering approved because he believed the Union to be already dissolved (see ibid., 1116).
29. Ibid., 1120–21.
30. George Ticknor quoting John Adams in ibid., 1122.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 1123.
34. History I, 1019.
35. Ibid., 1020.
36. History II, 1342.
37. Ibid., 1336–41. Adams undertakes an extensive analysis of each of the major naval battles and in each case gives a detailed discussion of the gunnery on each side,
invariably demonstrating the superiority of the American performance. Levenson is helpful on these matters; see *Mind and Art*, 176–80.

39. Ibid., 1299–1300.
41. Shaw, "The War of 1812," 554. William Anders Smith also sees the hero of the entire work to be the American people (see "Henry Adams, Alexander Hamilton, and the American People as a 'Great Beast,'" *New England Quarterly* [June 1975], 225). He suggests that, like Tocqueville, Adams believed that the future of the world was tied to democracy.

42. *History II*, 1237.
43. John Adams quoted in Shaw, "The War of 1812," 549. Shaw sees John Quincy Adams's view as less favorable to Madison, though that evaluation is not obvious (see ibid.).

44. *History II*, 585–86; emphasis added.
45. Shaw, "The War of 1812," 553. Ernest Samuels reads this passage more literally so that it emerges as praise for Madison (see *Middle Years*, 398).
46. Even if the practice was abandoned, the principle was not. As Wilson Carey McWilliams reminds me, Adams knew full well that the principle could not be abandoned, both because the British thought that it was just, since American ships did shelter British deserters and nationals, and because it was potentially important to manning their fleet.

47. *History II*, 1331.
48. Ibid., 1332.
51. Ibid., 1300.
52. Ibid., 1317.
53. Ibid., 1330.
54. It is striking how little Adams was interested in the American Renaissance of the midcentury. The discussion is similar to Tocqueville's, but unlike his mentor, Adams lived to see the full flowering of American literature. That it made so little impression on one so sensitive is more than a little perplexing.

55. *History II*, 1245.
56. Ibid., 1302.
57. Ibid., 1304.
58. Ibid., 1305–6.
59. Ibid., 1309.
60. Ibid., 1309–12.
62. Ibid., 1313.
63. Ibid., 1314–16. Taylor wrote to answer John Adams’s Defense of the Constitutions of the United States, which, by the logic of Henry’s reasoning, he must also have considered obsolete.

64. History II, 1331. The reference to uniformity may well owe something to the influence of Tocqueville.

65. Ibid., 1331–32.

66. Ibid., 1332.

67. Ibid., 1332–35.

68. Ibid., 1334–35.

69. Ibid., 1336. Tocqueville, of course, had a brighter view of American political capacity.

70. Ibid., 1342–43.

71. Ibid., 1345.

72. Levenson, Mind and Art, 187.

73. History II, 1345. Samuels is inclined to see these questions as purely rhetorical (see Middle Years, 352–53), and they are in form. However, I argue below that they are of real substance for the development of American democracy.


76. Samuels alludes to this comparison, though he does not dwell on it (see Middle Years, 349–50, 353). Like anyone concerned with Tolstoy’s theory of history, I owe a huge debt to Isaiah Berlin’s great essay “The Hedgehog and the Fox,” in Russian Thinkers (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 22–81.


78. Henry Adams to Samuel J. Tilden, January 24, 1883, in Letters 2:491. For Decker’s comments on this theme, see Literary Vocation, 202–3.

79. Decker, Literary Vocation, 183.

80. See Berlin, “Hedgehog and Fox,” 81. For a fuller discussion, see chapter 8.

81. History I, 907. Samuels notes that in his draft, Adams claimed that in 1808 Congress could have doubled its proportions of tailors and swindlers if it could have lessened the number of “gentlemen.” Reading the draft, his brother Charles persuaded him to change “gentlemen” to “conspirators” (Samuels, Middle Years, 378–79).

4. Secession, Capitalism, and Corruption

1. Education, 325. This statement may suggest that Lincoln had a greater significance for Adams than his rather cursory remarks suggest.

ment that reveals a great deal about his assessment of American political and constitutional history.

3. Ibid., 141.
4. Ibid., 142.
5. Ibid., 144.
7. Randolph, 37.
8. Ibid., 51–52.
9. See Robert McColley’s introduction to Randolph, 16.
10. Randolph, 52.
11. Ibid., 53.
12. Ibid., 178.
13. Ibid., 179, 189.
17. Charles Francis Adams quoted in ibid., 78.
18. On Adams’s political career, see Brooks D. Simpson, The Political Education of Henry Adams (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996). This useful study is a good guide to Adams’s political writings following his return from England in 1868. It is also very helpful in searching the letters of this period. Simpson has a real mastery of the sources, though I find the book to be marred by the author’s hostility to his subject.
appeared as an inexplicable, accidental destruction of the old America into which he had been born” (ibid.). Against this should be set Adams’s denunciations of the slave power.

27. Education, 235.
29. Ibid., 237. Perhaps the influence of Tocqueville’s Democracy in America can be seen here.

31. On this development, see the massive ongoing study of constitutional change by Bruce Ackerman, We the People I: Foundations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 82 and passim, and We the People II: Transformations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), passim. See especially We the People II, 113–15, for a brief discussion of whether the South was to be treated as a conquered province, an argument central to the Reconstruction plans of Republican radicals.

36. Ibid., 260.
37. Ibid., 260–61.
38. Ibid., 262.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., 263.
41. Ibid., 263–67.
42. Ibid., 267. On this point, see note ibid., 619 n. 28. In fact, the number of years to meet the goal was about thirty.
43. Ibid., 249.
45. Education, 247. Of course, one may be permitted to doubt the truth of Adams’s claim that he was not worthy of credit. State Street refers to the center of the Boston banking industry.
46. Henry Adams to Hugh Milnes Gaskell, March 7, 1870, in Letters 2:65. The article in question was based on work done by his friend Francis Walker, but to protect Walker, who had become census superintendent, Adams assumed full authorial responsibility. See Samuels, Young Henry Adams, 192. In one of the running themes of The Political Education of Henry Adams, Brooks Simpson contends that Adams often undercut his effectiveness by the violence of his polemical style.
48. Ibid., 145.
49. Ibid., 134.
50. Ibid., 134–35.
51. Ibid., 148–49.
52. If McCulloch v. Maryland had not already done the job, then certainly “the constitutionalization of paper money was one of the achievements of Republican Reconstruction” (Ackerman, Foundations, 167). See also The Legal Tender Cases, 79 U.S. (12 Wall.) 457 (1871).
53. Ackerman, Foundations, 150.
54. William Pitt Fessenden quoted in ibid., 151.
55. On Adams’s faith in laissez-faire economics, see Samuels, Young Henry Adams, 193. Samuels comments, “For a devotee of the Constitution he was uttering more dangerous doctrine than he knew, as the arguments of the higher law had already cost a civil war and could more properly be asserted by non-idolaters.” The opinion recalls Adams’s 1861 comment that it was futile for the stonemasons’ union to strike for the nine-hour day, as such matters are “regulated by rules which are beyond the just range of mere enacted law” (quoted in ibid., 194).
56. Adams quoted in Great Secession Winter, 61, editor’s note. On the question of reaching cultivated minds, Adams writes, “The difference is slight, to the influence of an author, whether he is read by five hundred readers, or by five hundred thousand; if he can select the five hundred, he reaches the five thousand” (Education, 259).
59. Ibid., 67–68.
60. Ibid., 70.
61. Ibid., 71.
63. Ibid., 98–99.
64. Ibid., 102.
65. Ibid. Interestingly, though one can hardly think of Lincoln as a weak president, Adams says that it was in his administration that Congress first assumed that local patronage was its right (ibid., 103).
66. Ibid., 104.
67. Ibid., 113.
68. Ibid., 125.
69. Ibid., 127.
71. Ibid., 164.
72. Ibid., 159.
73. *Education*, 269–70.
77. *Education*, 292. Adams points out that the article on the gold conspiracy was also "instantly pirated on a great scale" (ibid.).
80. Ibid., 195–99.
81. Ibid., 202. Adams notes again the corruption of the great cities and the growth of corporate power (ibid., 205).
82. Ibid., 205, 222.
86. Ibid., 265.
87. Ibid., 266–67, 270.
89. Ibid., 275.
90. Alexander Hamilton quoted in ibid., 276.
91. Ibid., 279–80.
92. Ibid., 280–81.
93. Ibid., 285–86.
94. Ibid., 286. Interestingly, a similar point is made about the War of 1812. That war was deservedly popular, says Adams, not because of military glory or even naval glory. Rather, "it showed that there is such a thing as self-respect in a nation," and "it did more to strengthen the national feeling than all the twenty-five years that had preceded it." Moreover, just as with the South, "New England learned then, once and for all, not to trifle with the Constitution and with the Union" (ibid., 284).
95. Ibid., 258. Adams cannot resist a dig at von Holst's German perspective. Noting von Holst's tendency to patronize American history and statesmen, and alluding
to Bismarck, Adams suggests that “however bad an institution Tammany Hall may be, it at least did not corrupt our American universities, nor pervert the moral sense of our historians” (ibid., 282).

96. Ibid., 287.


98. Ibid.


100. Ibid., 301, 324. Still, he was surely, if perhaps sadly, right that “the South will in the future be left to work out its own destiny undisturbed by national interference” (ibid., 303).

101. Ibid., 293–94.

102. Ibid., 298–301.

103. Ibid., 306–7.

104. Ibid., 307–8.

105. Ibid., 327–30, quote at 330. Here it seems that Adams had the British civil service in mind.

106. Ibid., 326–27.

107. Ibid., 322–23. Adams’s position offended the Republican Party orthodoxy of the publishers of the North American Review, so he had to give up his position as editor, though he was no doubt ready to do so anyway. See Samuels, Young Henry Adams, 286.


5. Democracy and Empire

1. For a discussion of who is represented by the characters in the novel, see Samuels, Middle Years, 84–97.

2. Democracy, 25. This intense “Americanness,” if that is the proper term, is very like Marion “Clover” Adams, Henry Adams’s wife. Henry James said, “Clover Adams is the incarnation of my native land” (quoted in Eugenia Kaledin, The Education of Mrs. Henry Adams [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994], 13). Always clear-headed, Clover notes this remark and adds that this is “a most equivocal compliment coming from him. Am I then vulgar, dreary, and impossible to live with. . . . Poor America! She must drag on somehow without the sympathy & love of her denationalised children. I fancy she’ll weather it” (quoted in ibid., 18). Kaledin’s study is notable as a biography of Mrs. Adams; as an illustration of how difficult it was for a woman of outstanding ability to find an outlet for her intelligence in nineteenth-century America; and, not least, for its insights into the work of Henry Adams.

3. Democracy, 2–8, 39. Other less central but still striking aspects of Madeleine’s
character include the fact that "she herself had not entered a church in years; she said it gave her unchristian feelings," and "she was something more than republican—a little communistic at heart" (ibid., 11, 149). Her thoughts on religion link Madeleine to the title character in *Esther*.

4. The summary is that of Denis Donoghue, "Henry Adams’ Novels," in *Nineteenth Century Fiction* (September 1994), 188–89.

6. Ibid., 37.
7. Ibid., 38.
8. Ibid., 40. As William Decker points out, Gore’s views are confirmed by Adams in the chapter “American Ideals” in the *History*. See Decker, *Literary Vocation*, 152.

10. Irving Howe, *Politics and the Novel* (New York: Meridian Books, 1987), 181; Samuels, *Middle Years*, 86. On occasion, Adams liked to boast (or perhaps tease) that he enjoyed striking a “blow at democracy.” But I think it is right to note of the novel, along with Samuels, that “violent as the satire was, it reflected a mind eager to amend democracy.” Not knowing who the anonymous author was, a friend wrote to Mrs. Adams, “The author seemed to me profoundly convinced that America had made the only solution worth having of the problem of government” (Samuels, *Middle Years*, 84).

15. Ibid., 53.
16. Ibid., 80–81.
17. Ibid., 151.
20. Ibid., 55.
21. Ibid., 173–76.
22. Ibid., 182, 168.
24. Ibid., 60.
26. Colacurcio, “Adams’s Flirtation,” 60–61. There is an interesting alternative reading of the conclusion of *Democracy*. Fuehrer suggests that Madeleine Lee’s sister Sybil strikes a balance between idealism and realism that Adams approves of. She too is an idealist, but she is quite willing to conspire with Nathan Gore to provide her
sister with documentary evidence that Ratcliffe is guilty of bribery in order to induce her to turn down his proposal. This suggests that she is willing to play "hardball" politics in order to further her idealistic ends. Thus, she is willing to go beyond mere moralizing in pursuit of her political goals, without abandoning her moral distaste for Ratcliffe and, more generally, her dislike of the endemic corruption of late-nineteenth-century politics. As Fuehrer says in her conclusion, Sybil "assures that it is possible to employ the darker elements of political power in the service of idealism." Perhaps Adams intended us to come away with this lesson. See Natalie Fuehrer, "The Landscape of Democracy," Legal Studies Forum 4 (1998), 627-39, quote at 639. However, Sybil is a relatively minor character in the novel, and this interpretation does not square with Adams's withdrawal from active politics. However, to see this aspect of the book's arguments shows the richness of Adams's thinking on the problem of the relationship of politics to morality.


28. Hofstadter, Age of Reform, esp. 140-43. Hofstadter's remarks on the ineffectuality of the reformers should be qualified a little. Elections during the period tended to be quite close, so the Mugwumps often held the balance of power. Thus they were instrumental in securing passage of the Pendleton Act. However, this achievement did little to alter the course of politics as the century drew to a close. See Shefter, Political Parties and the State, 74.


30. An important treatment that is also a classic in sociological theory is Robert K. Merton, "The Latent Functions of the Political Machine," in Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957), 72-82.

31. For similar views, see Howe, Politics and the Novel, 180, and Decker, Literary Vocation, 149-52.


34. On the letters as a guide to Adams's views on foreign policy I relied heavily on David R. Contosta, "Henry Adams and the American Century," in Adams and His World, 36–47. There is no way I could surpass Contosta's thorough job of mining the primary sources in the letters, so I followed his research here.


38. Contosta, "Adams and the American Century," 43–47. Contosta provides a guide to the primary sources as found in the letters. He is right to note how Adams subdues his long-standing Anglophobia in what he took to be the interests of peace.


40. Samuels, Major Phase, 246–47; Education, 417.


42. Woodrow Wilson, Congressional Government, introduction by Walter Lippmann (1885; reprint, Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1956); James Bryce, The American Commonwealth (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1995). The balance of power between the legislative and executive branches established by the Constitution was clearly nondefinitive. Lippmann suggests that there is a cyclical alteration of power (see Wilson, Congressional Government, 7–8). Wilson described the executive end of this tension in his 1908 book Constitutional Government.


44. Education, 343–45.

45. This is a very complex debate that need not be fully explored here. For a sharp contrast between an analysis focused on the context in which institutions operate and one in which institutions are said to have much greater independent force, see Robert A. Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), and Harvey Mansfield, Jr., America's Constitutional Soul (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), esp. 137–62.


55. Russell L. Hanson and W. Richard Merriman, “Henry Adams and the Decline of the Republican Tradition,” *American Transcendental Quarterly* (September 1990), 161–83. This is the best work done by any political theorists on Adams. Though we differ on how early the decline of republicanism began, the general outlines of our positions are close, and I have learned a great deal from this piece. In the following discussion of Adams and republicanism, I have drawn heavily on it. On the broader setting of their argument, see Russell L. Hanson, *The Democratic Imagination in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985). For my comments on this fine study, see my review in *Political Theory* (May 1987), 265–69.


57. Ibid., 169. One is reminded of the opening of Karl Marx’s Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon.

58. This should not be taken as an endorsement of the republican argument. That is another topic I leave open here. For an interesting and skeptical discussion of the republican revival, see Don Herzog, “Some Questions for Republicans,” *Political Theory* (August 1986), 473–91.


61. Martin J. Sklar, “Disaffection with Development: Henry Adams and the 1960s ‘New Left,’” in *The United States as a Developing Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 197–208. Note that Sklar does not regard himself as a New Leftist but rather as “an extremely old left thinker, a socialist, and an historian.” By this he means to convey “a rootedness in the Enlightenment and nineteenth-century rationalism, humanism, and evolutionism” (197). Adams might well have been pleased or at least stimulated.

6. Religion, History, and Politics

1. Education, 34. See also the remark shortly after. “The children reached manhood without knowing religion, and with the certainty that dogma, metaphysics, and
abstract philosophy were not worth knowing. So one-sided an education could have been possible in no other country or time, but it became, almost of necessity, the more literary and political” (35). It may be that the novel Esther is Adams’s justification for the cessation of his churchgoing. See Samuels, Middle Years, 235.

2. Education, 85.
3. Ibid., 353.
7. Samuels, Young Henry Adams, 261–62.
9. Ibid., 343.
10. Ibid., 358.
11. Samuels, Young Henry Adams, 263.
12. Adams, “Primitive Rights,” 358–59. Note that vindictiveness is treated as a positive quality. Adams concedes that some relief came with the Protestant Reformation, though he seems not to notice that the revolution against religious and political absolutism was accompanied by new forms of absolute authority (ibid., 360).
15. Decker, Literary Vocation, 206.
16. All the same, on one of his more exotic subjects, the Norse legends, Adams looks fairly sound. In medieval Iceland, women suffered some legal disabilities, but whether single or married, they had substantially more property rights than in other Scandinavian countries or on the Continent. Rules governing divorce were complex and related more to natal kin than to the marriage grouping, but they were relatively egalitarian. See William Ian Miller, Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 27, 149–50.
18. Frances is a feminine version of Francis, an old family name, while Snow and Compton suggest Adams’s bleak Comtean outlook. See Levenson, Mind and Art, 199, and Decker, Literary Vocation, 214.
20. For a discussion of the real-life sources of the characters in the novel, see Samuels, Middle Years, 238–44, and Levenson, Mind and Art, 200–201.
21. Clarence King was a very close friend of the Adamses and a member of their inner social circle. On this group, see the fine book by Patricia O'Toole, *The Five of Hearts* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990). In addition to the Adamses and King, the other two members were John Hay and his wife Clara. O'Toole likens them to the Bloomsbury group or Gertrude Stein's circle in Paris. The Hearts “had a genius for befriending everyone worth knowing” (xii). For O'Toole's reading of *Esther*, see 133–39.


23. For James on Clover Adams, see the previous chapter.

24. *Esther*, 199–200. This passage parallels one in the *History*, so that Esther's character is seen as parallel to the national character. Decker points to the brilliant chapter in the *History* on the glories of the privateering schooner in the War of 1812; see *Literary Vocation*, 211–13. Decker's interpretation of *Esther* is one of the finest readings of the novel. Wharton's comment that Esther has never read a book does not apply to Marian Adams, who read voraciously.


26. Ibid., 263.

27. Ibid., 200. The observation that Esther is in no way medieval is interesting, in view of Adams's foray into medievalism in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, where the Virgin Mary has characteristics markedly similar to Esther's and, by extension, to Marian Adams.

28. Ibid., 270, 200.


30. For an outstanding discussion, see Samuels, *Middle Years*, 227–35. For Samuels's interpretation of the novel, see 236–58.


32. Ibid., 191, 193.

33. Ibid., 294–95.

34. Ibid., 221.

35. Ibid., 281.

36. Ibid., 284–86; emphasis added.

37. Ibid., 296.

38. Ibid., 289.

39. Ibid., 330.


42. *Esther*, 333.

43. Ibid., 335.

44. Levenson, *Mind and Art*, 199.


47. Colacurcio, "Flirtation with Pragmatism," 69–70.


49. Chartres is more personal, Michael Colacurcio suggests, than Adams's (somewhat peculiar) autobiography. See Colacurcio's "The Dynamo and the Angelic Doctor: The Bias of Henry Adams' Medievalism," American Quarterly (winter 1965), 697. I have been much influenced by this article as well as by Alfred Kazin, "American Gothic," New York Review of Books (November 23, 1989), 45–46. It should be added that the Education has its own decidedly personal quirks.


55. Samuels, Major Phase, 283.

56. Ibid., 281. Samuels adds, "So far as art and architecture reflected the history of the time, it reflected the loves and hates, the alliances and rivalries, the trusts and treacheries of a small class of kings and queens, nobles and prelates."

57. History I, 227, 605.

58. Chartres, 556, 549.

59. Interestingly, if we are looking for a fixed starting point, the eleventh century seems, on Adams's own account, to be deficient. He admits that while the movement of the twentieth century is fast and furious enough to make us giddy, the eleventh "moved faster and more furiously still." He cites the Norman Conquest and the first crusade. The unity came with the energy with which Europe "flung itself on the East" (Chartres, 371).

60. Levenson, Mind and Art, 270. For a somewhat different view, see Colacurcio, "Dynamo and Angelic Doctor."

61. Chartres, 343.


64. *Chartres*, 579. Of course, the “biographical” literature is the twelfth- and thirteenth-century literary treatments of the Virgin and, even more, the major monuments of medieval art.

65. Robert Spiller writes, “The trail from Esther to the Virgin of Chartres, is a long and intricate one but it is straight” (quoted in Mane, *Road to Chartres*, 196).


67. Ibid., 424.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., 431–32.

70. Ibid., 432–33.

71. Ibid., 434.

72. Ibid., 434–36.

73. Ibid., 503. In this connection, it is interesting to note that *Chartres* ends with Aquinas and therefore the reception of Aristotle, which indicates what Adams laments as the displacement of the Virgin in Catholic theology.

74. Ibid., 581.

75. Ibid., 586.

76. Ibid., 600.

77. Ibid., 596.

78. Ibid., 596–97.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid., 582.

81. Ibid., 582–83.

82. Ibid., 583–84; emphasis added.


86. *Chartres*, 619.

87. Ibid., 622–23.

88. Ibid., 623–24.

89. Ibid., 632. Adams goes on to note that Bernard and Lord Bacon arrive at the same conclusion starting from opposite points.

90. Blackmur, *Henry Adams*, 210. See Adams’s harsh biography of Randolph. But could Adams not also be described as an irritant, an innovator, and a rebellious anarchist? Certainly this comes close to his own self-description.

91. Ibid., 211.


94. Chartres, 640.
95. Ibid., 650.
96. Ibid., 656–57.
97. Ibid., 657.
98. Ibid., 657–58.
99. Ibid., 659.
100. Samuels, Major Phase, 278, 301. Mane suggests that “the fall of the House of Mary corresponds to what was, for this fourth-generation Adams, the Fall of the House of Adams” (Road to Chartres, 238).
101. Chartres, 663–64.
102. Manes, Road to Chartres, 210–11.
103. Henry Adams to Charles Milnes Gaskell, July 27, 1900, in Letters 5:141. Surely this must be the only time Saint Thomas has ever been called droll. The choice of this adjective says a lot about Adams’s underlying attitudes.
105. Mane, Road to Chartres, 219.
106. Chartres, 666. Adams analyzes only one of Thomas’s proofs.
107. Ibid., 667.
110. Ibid., 692–93.
112. Chartres, 438.
114. Chartres, 670.
115. Ibid., 685.
116. Ibid., 684–85.
117. Ibid., 686–87.
118. Ibid., 681, 693.
119. Ibid., 693.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid., 692–93.
122. Ibid., 442. Adams does not mention the collapse of the crossing tower at Beauvais, which would have made direct comparison with Chartres “too obvious” (Levenson, Mind and Art, 282).
123. Blackmur, Henry Adams, 221.
125. Ibid., 522.
126. Ibid., 695.
127. Decker, Literary Vocation, 257.
128. George Kateb, “Aestheticism and Morality: Their Cooperation and Hostility,” Political Theory (February 2000), 5–37. Kateb argues that aestheticism, whether demo-
cratic or not, is inescapable and that it accounts for much that is great in human existen­
tce. At the same time, he fears that there is a risk that aesthetic values will be placed above moral concerns. For an argument that beauty conduces to justice, see Elaine Scarry, On Beauty and Being Just (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999). Scarry’s book is itself beautiful, though I cannot comment here on whether it is convincing. She mentions Chartres Cathedral as an instance of the beautiful but does not elaborate (see 49).


130. See Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

131. Chartres, 524.

132. Mane, Road to Chartres, 200–201.


134. Mane, Road to Chartres, 202.

135. Henry Adams to George Cabot Lodge quoted in Samuels, Major Phase, 287.


137. See Mane, Road to Chartres, 194.

138. Samuels, Major Phase, 270.


140. Carney, introduction, xxv. Later, Carney, referring to the treatment of Saint Thomas, remarks on “the outrageousness, the extravagance, the outright nuttiness (at times) of these passages” (xxvi). He uses such adjectives throughout.

141. For Carney on Adams’s treatment of Aquinas, see ibid.


143. Samuels, Major Phase, 266.

7. History, Science, and Politics: A Lifetime’s Education

1. I want to use the Education much less as a clue to the life of Henry Adams than as a source of ideas on his political and social thought. Like most such books, Adams tells us what he wants us to know about his life with relatively little regard for the actual events. Nevertheless, we can learn something about the period itself, as well as his philosophy, from his observations.

2. Colacurcio argues, “The work which seems to be a history turns out to be a good deal more personal than the one which seems to be an autobiography” (Michael Colacurcio, “The Dynamo and the Angelic Doctor: The Bias of Henry Adams’

3. Andrew Delbanco, “Henry Adams and the End of the World,” in *Required Reading* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997), 98. I disagree with Delbanco’s argument that Adams’s corrosive irony was meant to dissolve the self. However, this is a fine essay.


5. Alfred Kazin, *An American Procession* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 278; see also 294. One is reminded of the famous quip about Winston Churchill’s history of World War I: “Winston has written a three volume work about himself and called it *The World Crisis*.”


10. Ibid., 7.

11. Ibid., 15–16.

12. Ibid., 32–33.

13. Ibid., 12.


15. Ibid., 47–48.

16. Ibid., 48–49.

17. Ibid., 54–58; quote at 57–58.

18. Ibid., 60, 560, editor’s nn. 9, 10. Adams had a copy of the Marx dated 1887.


Or, as Samuels puts it, “Henry continued to subordinate science to conventional metaphysics as did Agassiz himself” (*Young Henry Adams*, 165).


21. Ibid., 70–97.

22. For Henry’s detailed contemporaneous account, see the title essay in *Great Secession Winter*.


24. Ibid., 100–101.

25. Ibid., 102.

26. Ibid., 104–5.
27. Ibid., 107.

28. Adams made belated amends to his slighting of Lincoln when he contributed an introduction to the letters and selections from the diary of John Hay, prepared with Mrs. Hay. In international politics, Adams wrote, “the hand is the hand of Hay, but the temper, the tone, the wit and genius bear the birthmark of Abraham Lincoln.” As Samuels remarks, this comes with “sudden grace,” while it also suggests reservations about Hay’s achievements (Major Phase, 408). Herbert Croly recalled to Edmund Wilson a meeting with Adams to discuss the possibility of his writing a biography of Hay. “By the time he left Adams’ presence, Croly had been made to feel that he would not for anything in the world undertake the biography of Hay. Though Adams’ ostensible role had been that of a friend of the family who was trying to provide a memorial for an old and valued friend, he had constantly betrayed this purpose by intimating in backhanded but unmistakable fashion his conviction that Hay was a mediocre person, that it would be impossible to write truthfully about him, and to satisfy the family at the same time, and that no self-respecting writer ought to think of taking on the job” (Edmund Wilson, introduction to Henry Adams, The Life of George Cabot Lodge, in The Shock of Recognition, ed. Edmund Wilson [New York: Modern Library, 1955], 743–44). This runs very much counter to the opinion of Hay expressed in the Education.

29. Education, 109; emphasis added.

30. On Socratic ignorance in this instance, see Education, 574, editor’s n. 21. Samuels also comments on the “widening embrace of the metaphor of ‘education.’ Education becomes an omnibus term for knowledge of cause and effect in every area of human experience, especially history and politics.” Adams, Samuels also notes, felt that he could assume that they knew less than he because they were unaware of their ignorance. One must doubt that this was the case with Lincoln. Finally, Samuels suggests that Adams implies that soldiers on the battlefield would teach their leaders what was at stake and what needed to be done. Perhaps. One might add that if so, there is a certain similarity to Tolstoy’s War and Peace here. This is true, I think, in other aspects of Adams’s work, though it seems less clear here.

31. There is no clue as to how close to the inside Henry got in his post or whether he participated as an adviser in the decision-making process. There is the precedent of his grandfather John Quincy Adams, who held responsible positions as a teenager. Henry was twenty-three when he went to London.


33. Ibid., 116.

34. Ibid., 128, 132, 133.

35. Ibid., 135.

36. Ibid., 148.

37. Ibid., 149, 151.

38. Ibid., 153–54.

39. Ibid., 155. In fairness to Gladstone, it should be noted that his communication to Palmerston was dated before the news from Antietam, so that on this point, he
looks less foolish than Adams suggests. However, Gladstone was soon to give Adams more ammunition after he was in full possession of the facts.

40. William Gladstone quoted in Education, 156.
41. Ibid., 156–59.
42. Ibid., 163–65.
43. Ibid., 161–62. Gladstone’s notes are bizarre and are clearly designed to make both Russell and Palmerston look bad.

44. George F. Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1917–1920, 1, Russia Leaves the War (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1956), viii. It is interesting to reflect on the similarities between Adams and Kennan. The latter, while not of Adams’s class background, was still anxious to serve his country and was sometimes vilified for his pains. He can be highly critical and at the same time movingly patriotic in the best sense of the word, that is, by trying to serve and reserving the right to criticize.


46. John Adams, Discourses on Davila, quoted in Levenson, Mind and Art, 27.
47. Levenson, Mind and Art, 27, citing Yvor Winters.


52. Ibid., 231.
53. Ibid., 231–32.
54. Ibid., 232.
55. Levenson, Mind and Art, 319.
57. Ibid., 287–88.
58. Ibid., 288–89.
59. Levenson, Mind and Art, 323.

60. Ibid., 321. Yet, as Levenson points out, in Chartres, Adams tells us that we may choose between Saint Francis’s embrace of death and the complexities of Saint Thomas. This, he says, is as close as Adams came to saying, with Dylan Thomas, “Do not go gentle into that good night.” Adams, “fully conscious of how fragile were the works of man, chose the less simple solution” (ibid., 324; for the Chartres, see 661).
62. Ibid., 301.
63. Ibid., 300. Adams was doubtless right that he could teach students nothing (ibid., 306). Students really teach themselves, but they can be guided, and by all accounts, Adams was brilliant in that role.
64. Ibid., 321, 325.
65. Ibid., 335, 336.
66. As it turned out, Adams, being a more prudent investor, was in less danger than his brothers Brooks and Charles. As Brooks says, “Henry was not the least affected by our indiscretions” (“The Heritage of Henry Adams,” in *Degradation*, 90).
68. *Education*, 342.
69. Russell L. Hanson and W. Richard Merriman, “Henry Adams and the Decline of the Republican Tradition,” *American Transcendental Quarterly* (September 1990), 175. They suggest that since one way to return to first principles to revive civic virtue is to write history, this may explain Adams’s abandonment of traditional history. Perhaps this is so, though it is just as possible that Adams, with his interest in sweeping generalizations, merely wanted to expand his horizons. Recall that he wrote that between them, he and John Hay had written most of the American history worth writing. Hanson and Merriman are certainly right that at this point in the nineteenth century, a return to republican principles was too late. For comments on this fine interpretation of Adams, see chapter 5.
71. Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, October 19, 1896, in ibid., 433.
72. Brooks Adams was also delighted by Bryan’s performance, particularly since he had refused to be bought off by Wall Street money. However, he feared that the mone­eyed interests would seize the government if Bryan won (Samuels, *Major Phase*, 169).
73. *Education*, 355. It should be remembered that since he resided in the District of Columbia, Adams could not vote there. Moreover, he did not maintain a Massa­chusetts voting address. Perhaps he felt that, given the state of the parties, there was no point in voting.
74. Walter Dean Burnham, “The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe,” in *The Current Crisis in American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 51, 25–55. This is an important article for understanding the crises of both Adams’s time and our own; indeed, the two are part of the same movement.
to add a second formula to the effect that, given centralization, Asia is cheaper than Europe, so that Asia tends to survive and Europe to perish (ibid., 558).

77. Education, 339.
82. Education, 225. Adams did follow developments in Marxist theory. Brooks sent him a copy of the German edition of Eduard Bernstein's Evolutionary Socialism. Saying that he took Marxism to be the foundation of Brooks's ideas, Henry added, "The assertion of the law of economy as the law of history is the only contribution that the socialists have made to my library of ideas, and I am curious to get their best statement" (Henry Adams to Brooks Adams, October 31, 1899, in Letters 5:54–55). A few days later, he responded in more detail. After noting that Bernstein is Jewish and that his writing style is impossible, Adams states, "He seems to prove that he is very much in my intellectual condition. He throws up the sponge in the whole socialist fight. Absolutely nothing is left of Karl Marx except his economical theory of history in its crudest form. . . . Bernstein not only argues, but proves, that the Marxian theory of a social cataclysm has been abandoned, and that the socialist has no choice but to make himself a petit bourgeois, with all the capitalistic machinery and methods. He preaches the bankruptcy of the only idea that our time has produced." He adds that the capitalists have abandoned their teachers and principles and that there is no reason why the capitalist "should not become a socialist functionary" (Henry Adams to Brooks Adams, November 5, 1899, in ibid., 56). This is an early statement of the convergence theory so much discussed two to three decades ago. The influence of Comte is most clear in an essay called "The Rule of Phase Applied to History," discussed in the next chapter.
83. Levenson, Mind and Art, 226.
84. Decker, Literary Vocation, 98.
86. Levenson, Mind and Art, 223–24; Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, September 5, 1899, in Letters 5:26. Levenson notes that Adams's virulence tapered off when the Dreyfus affair came to an end and he turned to more constructive work. "The latter explanation is the one hopeful aspect of a story which is disagreeable in itself and necessarily alarming to a world that has witnessed antisemitism as a catastrophic social event rather than as, in Adams's case, a datum of personal psychology like insomnia or an addiction to privacy. One consequence of the episode is the occasional use of the word 'Jew' which disfigures, albeit inessentially, his late masterpieces—pockmarks of a disease that can be fatal" (Mind and Art, 226).
87. Samuels, Major Phase, 358.
91. *History I*, 119–20. Levenson comments that this indicates a profound commitment to American democracy. “The scion of presidents, not the first of his family to be accused of blood-pride, made steerage immigrants, malarial frontiersmen, and lower-class inventors his heroes alongside the Virginia aristocrat to whom he gave his qualified allegiance” (*Mind and Art*, 148).
92. Baltzell, *Protestant Establishment*, 91. This date might be subject to correction if one searched the now standard Harvard edition of the letters, which was not available to Baltzell when he wrote. He used the Cater edition. However, the date is surely approximately correct.
93. Ibid., 93. For Baltzell's more general theory, see 7–10.
96. See the massive study by Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997). Smith is mainly interested in the problems of African Americans and women. Somewhat strangely, there is no index entry for Jews or antiethnic prejudice generally. Henry Adams is quoted briefly without reference to the subject.
98. Ibid., 164.
100. McWilliams, *Mask for Privilege*, 70. In spite of this observation, Adams, in an excess of self-pity combined with a seeming failure of self-knowledge, claims that he “found no fault with his time” and that he was no worse off than the buffalo or the Indians, but he did insist that “he himself was not at fault” (*Education*, 238).
102. Ibid., 49; emphasis in original. It is interesting to note that at the time, the German word *Judentum* had, as its secondary meaning, commerce (ibid., 50, editorial note).
105. McWilliams, *Education of McWilliams*, 323.
107. Ibid., 340.
108. Ibid., 340–41.
109. Ibid., 342.
110. Ibid., 343. To this day, Chicago seems the quintessentially American city that Adams suggests it is, as well as an architectural marvel.
111. Ibid., 344.
112. Ibid., 379.
113. In fact, Adams wrote a prayer to the dynamo in the form of a poem included in a longer prayer to the Virgin of Chartres. One verse seems to hint at the possibility that he sees technology as a neutral force:

We know not whether you are kind  
Or cruel in your fiercer mood;  
But be you Matter, be you Mind,  
We think we know that you are blind,  
And we alone are good.

115. Ibid., 382.
116. Susan Haack, “Staying for an Answer: The Untidy Process of Groping for the Truth,” Times Literary Supplement (July 9, 1999), 13. Education, 382. The comment about Adams giving up too soon on conventional history does nothing to undermine the importance of his work pursuant to the impact of the dynamos.
118. Ibid., 383.
119. Ibid. Notice the parallel between the force of the Virgin and the power of X-rays, as Adams tries to assimilate the latest science to his thinking.
120. Ibid., 384.
121. Ibid., 384–85.
124. Ibid., 389.
125. Ibid., 397; emphasis added.
126. Ibid., 398.
radicals as miniature Adamses, caught in a period of transition between capitalist industrialism and socialism—a socialism that does not look very different from the capitalism it is trying to supplant.

128. *Education*, 405. Note that this is eight years after his speculations on Hungarian socialism in his letter to Brooks Adams.

129. Ibid., 406.

130. Ibid., 406–7.

131. Ibid., 407.

132. Ibid.


134. Levenson, *Mind and Art*, 296. Perhaps the point is not as frivolous as Levenson claims. Wilson Carey McWilliams suggests to me that Adams’s teaching is not unlike Matthew Arnold’s “Dover Beach,” where “ignorant armies clash by night.”


138. *Education*, 408. However, in his late “Letter to American Teachers of History,” he succumbs to chaos; see the next chapter.


140. Henry Adams to Bay Lodge, December 1, 1904, in *Letters* 5:616. Note that Bay Lodge had just written a poem about Cain.

141. *Education*, 408.

142. In working through the complexities of Adams’s thought on politics early in this century, particularly as expressed in his letters, I relied heavily on Levenson, *Mind and Art*, esp. 289–304.

143. *Education*, 436.

144. Ibid., 417.

145. Ibid., 418. It is no wonder that Roosevelt was not enthusiastic about the *Education*. Adams’s comments there are mild compared with his abuse of Roosevelt in his private correspondence.

146. Ibid., 418–19. In time, Adams came to be disdainful of Lodge. In 1900 he wrote, “Cabot more and more makes me sea-sick. His senatorial atmosphere has become unendurable” (Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, April 16, 1900, in *Letters* 5:121). Earlier the same year, he wrote, “As usual, the Senate makes trouble; and you know that to me the Senate means practically Cabot; and you know Cabot; and you don’t know that Cabot is ten times more cabotin than ever. The word was made to describe him, and it fits as though it were a Sargent portrait” (Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, February 19, 1900, in ibid., 94). According to an editorial note, *cabotin* means a “second-rate strolling actor; hence, political showman.”

147. McWilliams, *Education of McWilliams*, 323.
148. Henry Adams to Brooks Adams, September 20, 1910, in *Letters* 6:369; emphasis added. As I suggest later, 1910 marked a crucial turning point for Adams, and not a turning point for the better.

149. Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, August 27, 1905, in *Letters* 5:710.

150. Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, in ibid., 486. Earlier in the same letter, in one of his moods where he seems to hope that catastrophe will usher in a dramatically different system, Adams says, “Only I fear that, with their confounded practical common-sense, our people will soon realize [what is happening], and invent some practical working system” (485).

151. Blackmur, “Henry and Brooks Adams,” 316. Blackmur observes that Henry’s sophistication overrode his candor and that Brooks’s candor sometimes triumphed over his sophistication. During World War I, Brooks was elected to the Massachusetts constitutional convention, where he astonished the delegates with his “totalitarian proposals to save society.” He believed that democracy would perish without Draconian measures. In spite of this, he attacked what he saw as Wilson’s “dictatorial methods,” saying that they were not “the right foundation for an authoritarian society.” His hatred for the president was so great that “in an agony of frustration he wildly exhorted Lodge, ‘Kill Wilson!’” While Henry was by this time as critical of the failures of democracy as Brooks, “he was as skeptical of the prescriptions of the radical Right as of those of the radical Left—and, for that matter, of every other point of the political compass” (Samuels, *Major Phase*, 567–68).


153. Charles William Eliot quoted in Samuels, *Major Phase*, 369. For Samuels’s view, see ibid. It is true that after his final published work, Adams was bitterly critical of democracy in his letters, but his published work held, sometimes tenuously, to his belief.

8. The End of Education

1. Lynn White, Jr., *Dynamo and Virgin Reconsidered* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), 62–63. Beauvais Cathedral seems a strange choice, since as Adams subtly points out, that structure was unsound. White notes that these great buildings, instead of being built by slaves, were built by free and in fact unionized labor. Moreover, the churches displayed not only gifts from the aristocracy but also chapels, windows, and the like donated by merchants and craftsmen’s guilds. This points to a “social revolution closely connected with the technological revolution.”

2. Ibid., 72–73.


6. Cecilia Tichi, *Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist*
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7. Education, 466; cf. Tichi, Shifting Gears, 158.
15. Ibid., 458.
16. Ibid., 457.
17. Henry Adams, “The Tendency of History,” in Degradation, 130–31. One could suggest that it would be more difficult to proclaim the inevitable triumph of socialism in the United States than in Europe.
19. Ibid., 475.
20. Ibid., 484.
21. Ibid., 485.
22. Ibid., 486.
23. Ibid., 487.
24. Ibid., 489–90.
25. Ibid., 493.
26. Ibid., 493–94.
27. Ibid., 495.
29. Levenson, Mind and Art, 360. For Levenson on “The Rule,” see 358–66. Adams requested J. Franklin Jameson, the editor of the American Historical Review, to commission Henry Andrew Bumstead, a Columbia University physicist, to review “The Rule.” Bumstead “praised the ingenuity of Adams’s analogical applications but left no doubt in the historian’s mind that he possessed no knowledge, let alone mastery, of the language of scientific thought” (Decker, Literary Vocation, 72; see also Samuels, Major Phase, 449). The most devastating account of Adams’s scientific deficiencies is Jordy, Scientific Historian, 131–255.
31. Ibid., 286–93.
32. Ibid., 293–97, 305. Following Levenson, I omit discussion of the calculations.
33. Ibid., 308. Carey McWilliams points out to me that if we date the changes from
the condemnation of Galileo, we arrive at 1933, a most important year. This is a coin­
cidence, no doubt, but interesting to contemplate.
35. Ibid., 366, 369.
189–90.
37. Ibid., 185.
38. Ibid., 191.
39. Ibid., 263.
also points out that "history is the course of things before that terminus" (Andrew Del­
banco, *Required Reading* [New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997], 96). Del­
banco comments that the "wonderfully sanative" response of James has "the effect of
making Adams seem a brooding misanthrope, but one should resist the indictment.
In his own courageous way, Adams was driven by the peculiar spirit that has always both
inspired and afflicted the greatest American writers: by an unembarrassed willingness
to express the child's horror at the ubiquity of death, by the urge, as if in bedside
prayer, to speak directly with God" (ibid., 97).
I can agree that Adams was more than
a misanthrope; that characteristic was a mask, another of his poses. But given his deep
agnosticism, his desire to speak with God must have been limited, handicapped by
the fact that though he wished for faith, he never achieved it.
42. Ibid., 91.
43. Perry Miller quoted on the cover of the Harper Torchbooks edition of *De­
gradation*.
44. Mark Twain, "The Turning Point of My Life," in *Collected Tales, Sketches,
Speeches, and Essays: 1891–1910*, ed. Louis J. Budd (New York: Library of America,
(June 29, 2000), 9.
47. See Samuels, *Major Phase*, 363. Samuels points to the contradiction between
the "obsessive pose of pessimism and the lurking residue of optimism" in Adams's
work. This was part of the "habitual rhetoric of the idealist of the forlorn hope." Even
Adams says that he "had enjoyed his life amazingly" (ibid., 362, 363).
49. I leave out of consideration his biography of the poet George Cabot (Bay) Lodge,
which is politically insignificant and, in my view, otherwise uninteresting as well.
51. Ibid., 503.
52. Ibid., 505.
53. Ibid., xxx.
56. William James, writing to Adams, quoted in Samuels, *Major Phase*, 340–41; emphasis in original. Wilson Carey McWilliams suggests to me that this may say as much about James as about Adams, but that is another story. In a further exchange of letters, James assures Adams that his education was anything but a failure, but instead a "superlatively precious achievement." He ranks the *Education* with *Faust* as the "pride" of his library (ibid.).
59. In what follows, I was much helped by Decker, *Literary Vocation*, esp. 53–63. Decker is very sensitive to the tensions in Adams's work I have been discussing.
60. Ibid., 59.
61. For a useful survey of views that find unity, see ibid., 293–94 n. 21.
62. Ibid., 57.
64. Decker, *Literary Vocation*, 60.
66. Ibid., 1.
71. For the contrary position, see Judith Shklar, "The Education of Henry Adams by Henry Adams," in *Redeeming American Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 90. For Shklar, Adams's confession of his failure redeemed him. She admits, somewhat grudgingly, that there is much to learn from Adams.
73. Ibid., 217.
74. Winters agrees, as he heaps scorn on Chartres and the Education but places the History above even Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, calling it the “greatest historical work in English” (Yvor Winters, “Henry Adams or the Creation of Confusion,” in Defense of Reason [Denver: Allan Swallow, 1947], 415).

75. Dusinberre has an interesting suggestion. He would like to see a scholar do an annotated edition of the History, as J. B. Bury did of Gibbon’s Decline and Fall in the nineteenth century. There, in footnotes, the text could be corrected, supplemented, and challenged on the basis of later research. See Dusinberre, Myth of Failure, 161. Since Dusinberre wrote, we have the Harbert edition from the Library of America, which, though annotated, is not a critical edition in Dusinberre’s sense. Although Dusinberre’s suggestion is a good one, the resulting work would probably be too long to win a wide readership. It would also be helpful to have a substantial abridgment with a similar critical apparatus. There have been two abridgments, but they were too truncated to gain a real sense of Adams’s achievement.


77. Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers (New York: Free Press, 1986), 266. Apropos the problem of length, Neustadt and May say that in spite of its huge size, “it is such lively reading that it seems too short.”

78. What follows owes a good deal to questions and, in a few instances, hints of answers posed by Tom Dumm on the basis of an early draft of this study.

79. For the most part, documentation for this point and most of what follows has already been presented.

80. This point is most clearly stated in Melvin Lyon, Symbol and Idea in Henry Adams (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 65.

81. See chapter 7, note 28.

82. Samuels, Major Phase, 412.

83. I do not want to suggest here that the Progressive movement was an enormous success in its trust policy, but that Adams might have been a useful influence. Against this is the fact that Theodore Roosevelt was not friendly toward him. This is small wonder, given what Adams said of him in the Education, which TR had read in the privately circulated version.


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90. For an extensive exploration of the Hartz thesis and the peculiarities of the liberal tradition, see Young, Reconsidering American Liberalism.

91. It might be said that the charming story Adams tells about being marched off to school without his consent by John Quincy Adams suggests skepticism about the contractual theory of rights and the origin of authority.

92. Lyon, Symbol and Idea, see 58–77; Jordy, Scientific Historian, 81.


95. History I, 122.

96. Lyon, Symbol and Idea, 65.

97. Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957). Immanuel Wallerstein is much influenced by Polanyi. The best way into Wallerstein’s work is through The Modern World System (New York: Academic Press, 1974) and Historical Capitalism (London: Verso, 1983). Wallerstein also looks forward to a socialist world system or world government; see “The Rise and Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis,” in The Capitalist World-Economy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1–36. Adams would have been repulsed by the idea of a socialist world government but might have feared that it would come to pass. It is no doubt fortunate that this idea is clearly a fantasy. Wallerstein gives up no hostages by predicting when his projection would come to pass.


105. On this, see Kazin, “American Gothic,” 46.
106. Samuels, Major Phase, ix.
108. Diggins, Promise of Pragmatism, 45.
110. Ibid., 347.
111. There is an arguably deeper problem that Adams does not consider. “If the difficulties caused by technology are, in fact, only problems—say, for example, the problem of unintended side effects—we are certainly well-advised to be looking for solutions. But what if the difficulties attending technology are both integral to its very being and inseparable from its benefits—like the other side of a coin? This would make technology more like a tragedy that begs for understanding and endurance than like a problem that calls for a solution. To put the point starkly: to formulate the question about technology as the problem of technology is itself a manifestation of technological thinking—of the desire to knock down all obstacles, even if only in the mind. To ask about the problem of technology, in fact, exemplifies it.” Leon R. Kass, “Introduction: The Problem of Technology,” in Technology in the Western Political Tradition, ed. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 9–10.
112. For a provocative survey of this literature, see Winner, Autonomous Technology.
115. Ibid. Apropos Adams's alleged anti-intellectualism, he and the other Mugwumps were ridiculed as intellectual, antidemocratic snobs because of their adherence to civil service reform. See Richard Hofstadter, Anti-intellectualism in American Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 180–85. In fact, Adams had one of his rare periods of popularity when alienated intellectuals took him up during the 1920s (ibid., 409).
117. Ibid., 325; emphasis in original.
118. Ibid., 324.
119. Ibid., 325–31, quote at 331.
121. On these matters, see Alan Ehrenhalt, “Demanding the Right Size Government,” New York Times, national ed., October 4, 1999, A31. Following Daniel Bell, Ehrenhalt argues that in the twenty-first century the most important issues will be global or national. He is particularly struck by the ineffectuality of Congress. Here he may be overestimating the importance of a situation rooted in the peculiar politics of the 1998 elections. On the problem of finding the optimal unit size for governmental action, see Robert A. Dahl and Edward R. Tufte, Size and Democracy (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1973).
124. Ibid., 402.
125. Ibid., 422.
127. Laurie Anderson, program notes for her brilliant Songs and Tales from Moby Dick, University Musical Society, Ann Arbor, Mich., September 30, 1999, 6. She also writes, “I fell in love with the idea that the mysterious thing you look for your whole life will eventually eat you alive” (ibid.). It was Anderson who led me to Melville, whose work is very suggestive in dealing with Adams. It should be noted that where she writes “outlives,” Melville writes “lives out.” I think he intends the same thing she does, but if not, then what she says fits the case of Adams very well.
128. Levenson, Mind and Art, 188–89.
130. Ibid., 81.
131. Ibid.
133. Lionel Trilling, The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent: Selected Essays, ed.

134. Irving Howe, *A Margin of Hope* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 322. In this passage, Howe refers particularly to his friend Richard Hofstadter and also to Lionel Trilling. It seems to me that this understanding of intellectual capacity can readily be applied to Adams as well.

135. I owe the term *multivalent* to a personal communication from William Merrill Decker.
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